United Nations A/C.1/51/PV.14

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-first session

First Committee

14th Meeting

Monday, 4 November 1996, 10 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Sychou ..... (Belarus)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 60, 61 and 63-81 *(continued)*

Introduction and consideration of draft resolutions submitted on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, this morning the Committee will resume the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items. In this regard, I would like to point out that this meeting, as well as those scheduled for this afternoon, for Wednesday, 6 November, and for Thursday, 7 November, have been allocated for the introduction of draft resolutions and for comments on them. I urge the sponsors of draft resolutions kindly to introduce their draft resolutions at this stage of the work of the Committee in order to enable the Committee to utilize fully the conference resources at its disposal. No extension of the time-slot allocated for this purpose will be possible.

I call on the representative of the United States of America to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.46.

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): I am pleased at President Clinton's direction to introduce today, on behalf of my Government and more than six dozen other sponsors, a draft resolution (A/C.1/51/L.46) calling for an international agreement to ban the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines.

Our goal is to conclude as soon as possible an agreement that will remove this weapon from the arsenals of the world. Such an agreement would be a great gift to the future. Increasingly, countries from the four points of the compass — North, South, East and West — are agreeing on a common direction. Statements presented to the General Assembly this fall by Foreign Ministers from countries as diverse as Angola and Australia, the Philippines and Canada, Germany, Mexico and Mozambique, all agree: we must work together to end the terror caused by anti-personnel landmines, and we must do so as rapidly and as vigorously as we can.

This level of agreement did not arise by accident. We have been inspired by leaders of exceptional commitment and vision, such as Senator Patrick Leahy of the United States. I am extremely pleased that the Senator could be seated with our delegation today. He is a long-time leader in the effort to secure an international agreement to ban the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines.

We have been educated by private voluntary organizations and by those within the United Nations system which work with the populations most endangered by anti-personnel landmines. We have been helped by military leaders, including those of the United States, who have been willing to consider alternatives to their use of anti-personnel landmines in light of the suffering caused by others' misuse of these mines. We have been encouraged by last month's successful International Strategy Conference in Ottawa, where a broad commitment to the elimination of anti-personnel landmines was affirmed.

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Finally, we have been motivated by the victims: by the farmers who can no longer grow food on their land; the families who have lost loved ones; the peacekeepers who have been killed; and the children — the many thousands of innocent children — dependent now and for the rest of their lives on crutches, wagons, wheelchairs or artificial limbs.

Together, we have moved in a short time from tentative and largely unilateral steps to the proposal now for a global agreement to ban, once and for all, the use of anti-personnel landmines. Let there be no doubt: the United States is fully committed to this goal. Two years ago, before the General Assembly, President Clinton called upon all nations to join in ridding the world of these weapons. This past May, the President specifically proposed a negotiation aimed at achieving that objective. The President renewed his appeal for swift negotiation of a worldwide ban on anti-personnel landmines before the General Assembly in September.

We recognize that some Governments have security concerns with respect to their borders or demilitarized zones. The United States, too, has such a concern. But this should not prevent us from negotiating an agreement to end the use of anti-personnel landmines. The urgency is clear. Between now and the start of the new century, anti-personnel landmines will likely claim 100,000 more victims, most of them civilians, many of them children.

When wars end, most weapons are put down, turned in or hidden away as souvenirs. But landmines continue to kill and maim long after the passions of conflict have cooled. Their victims are often children, and even during conflicts, landmines are used more and more not to limit the movements of an opposing army, but as weapons of terror against civilians.

An estimated 110 million anti-personnel landmines, in 70 countries, now litter the Earth. At the current rate, even if no more anti-personnel landmines are deployed, the new century will be over and so will the six centuries following that, before the mines now in place are cleared. We are, in fact, going backwards. Last year, about 150,000 old anti-personnel landmines were cleared; about 2,000,000 new mines were put in place.

The problem with anti-personnel landmines is not that in the context of modern weapons, they are exceptionally destructive. It is that they are so prone to misuse by the desperate, the financially hard-pressed, the poorly trained and the cowardly. Unfortunately, these adjectives apply to many of the military and guerrilla forces that have fought in recent hot wars. Anti-personnel landmines are tempting because they are cheap to buy and easy to lay. They are invidious because they continue to maim and kill indiscriminately. And they are costly because they make international peacekeeping and relief efforts more complicated, expensive and dangerous.

While deployment technology has advanced, mine-clearing technology remains primitive, requiring the careful probing of soil, centimetre by centimetre, step by step. As a result, in the effort to remove anti-personnel landmines, training is essential; recruits are sometimes hard to find, costs are high and progress is slow. For a nation struggling to regain its feet after civil conflict, these mines are an albatross, retarding the return of refugees, the replanting of crops, the rebuilding of schools and the recovery of normal economic life.

The goal of the draft resolution offered today is an agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines. But it also calls upon States, in the interim, to reduce the carnage these weapons cause. It urges the voluntary adoption of moratoriums, either partial or comprehensive, on the transfer, use, production and stockpiling of these mines. Many countries, including the United States, have taken such steps; we invite others to join us now.

The draft resolution also encourages all countries to become parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its newly amended Protocol II. The Protocol moves beyond current law governing mines to include internal conflicts, and to require that mines be detectable, and that those not deployed within a marked and mapped minefield be of a type that will deactivate rapidly or self-destruct.

Finally, we must accelerate ongoing mine-clearance activities, and we must strive to close the technology gap, so that we may increase the speed, decrease the cost and cut dramatically the risk of removing anti-personnel landmines. The United States will remain at the forefront of these efforts.

The problems created by the misuse of anti-personnel landmines can be dealt only with on a global basis. Experience tells us that this misuse cannot effectively be regulated or controlled; it must be stopped. Lesser measures can contribute, but if the scourge is to end, the production, stockpiling, transfer and use of anti-personnel landmines must end.

Together, let us agree to take this step. The alternative is more anti-personnel landmines every year; more land pulled from production every year; more emergency resources diverted every year; more civilians maimed every year; more boys and girls buried every year.

In September, President Clinton told the General Assembly,

> "Our children deserve to walk the Earth in safety." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 6th meeting, p. 3)*

He spoke then of all children, from every nation. Let that, then, be the goal of all Governments, from every nation. Let us move from the draft resolution today to international agreement tomorrow, and by so doing, let us, for the benefit of future generations, heal the life-giving land that this generation has so grievously and pervasively scarred.

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): As this is the first time that my delegation has spoken in the Committee at this session, I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of your important position. We are convinced that with your guidance the work of the First Committee will move along its desired course and conclude its work successfully.

The question of anti-personnel mines has become a growing preoccupation not only of this forum, but also of other national and multilateral forums in recent years. Most recently, the convening of a special Security Council meeting on mine clearance in the context of peacekeeping operations and the adoption of the declaration "Towards a Global Ban on Anti-personnel Mines" at the International Strategy Conference in Ottawa earlier this year, clearly demonstrate that the political will for the eradication of this weapon exists. Yet more needs to be done. Mines, anti-personnel or otherwise, still exist in vast numbers, to which many innocents lose their lives each day.

The draft resolution before us is a definite step in the right direction. Its language is clear and decisive: a legally binding international agreement is our ultimate goal. It is our view that an ad hoc committee should be established immediately at the Conference on Disarmament to begin work on such an agreement, and an agreed text should be presented to the General Assembly at the outset of its fifty-second session. In the meantime, all States should pursue policies to establish their own moratoriums banning anti-personnel mines. We strongly believe that words need to be backed by action. Alternatively, States which have endorsed the use of this weapon as essential to their national defensive capabilities need to be convinced that alternatives can be developed to replace them.

In this regard, we should like to stress that Croatia actively participated in the discussion which brought about the amended Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices, and that the Government of Croatia has stated its intention to become a party to amended Protocol II in the near future. On the national level, Croatia has already proclaimed a unilateral moratorium on the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines.

Croatia calls on all countries which have not yet done so to accede to similar bans or restrictions and, most especially, to support this and other initiatives towards achieving a global ban on anti-personnel landmines. The nearly three million mines scattered over our territory and the resulting personal tragedies experienced by many of our citizens serve to remind us that the eradication of landmines is a necessity. By pooling our resources and common will, we can make a global ban on anti-personnel landmines in the not-too-distant future a distinct possibility. Croatia is co-sponsoring the draft resolution before us.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of Colombia, who will introduce the draft resolutions contained in documents A/C.1/51/L.11, A/C.1/51/L.12, A/C.1/51/L.21 and A/C.1/51/L.41, and the draft decision in document A/51/C.1/L.22.

Mr. García (Colombia): It is an honour and a privilege for Colombia to introduce, on behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, the draft resolutions contained in documents A/C.1/51/L.11, A/C.1/51/L.12, A/C.1/51/L.21 and A/C.1/51/L.41 and the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/51/L.22.

The importance of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament cannot be overemphasized, because the third special session devoted to disarmament (SSOD III) was convened more than eight years ago, in 1988. In the meantime, some significant agreements have been reached, following the end of the cold war, which have had a beneficial impact. But we cannot be oblivious to the fact that the international community continues to be burdened by the persistence of over armament. Hence, there is an imperative need to undertake a reassessment and reappraisal of the whole range of disarmament issues in order to determine our approaches and future course of action in the fields of

limiting armaments, disarmament and related security issues. It is the firm belief of the sponsors of the draft that these objectives can and should be achieved under the multilateral auspices of the United Nations.

It is for these weighty reasons that operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.11 calls for the convening of a fourth special session devoted to disarmament in the year 1999. Prior to that, however, adequate preparations would be essential in order to ensure its successful outcome. Operative paragraph 2 therefore calls for a meeting of the Preparatory Committee during the course of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, not only to set an exact date for the convening of the fourth special session, but also to take decisions on a number of organizational matters. Considering the importance we all attach to limiting, reducing and eliminating armaments, it is the hope of the sponsors that the draft resolution will receive the overwhelming support of Member States.

The draft resolution entitled "General and complete disarmament: relationship between disarmament and development", under item 71 (e) of the agenda, has been issued as document A/C.1/51/L.12 of 29 October 1996. This matter was considered at the Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries held in Cartagena. On that occasion the Heads of State or Government reiterated their concern over the fact that the arms race absorbs a major proportion of human, financial, material and technological resources in today's world, imposes a heavy burden on the economies of all countries, in particular developing countries, and affects international trade and financial and technological flows.

The draft resolution has the same elements as the resolution adopted without a vote last year on the same matter. This draft has a new operative paragraph 3, in which the General Assembly invites all Member States to communicate to the Secretary-General their views and proposals for the implementation of the action programme adopted at the International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development, as well as any other views and proposals, with a view to achieving the goals of the action programme, within the framework of current international relations.

In fact, in the new operative part, the General Assembly invites Member States to respond to the request on this matter issued by the Secretary General in his notes of the last two years, in particular, the note dated 11 July 1996 in which the Secretary-General has requested more guidance by Member States in regard to the activities of the Secretariat on this issue.

Thirdly, with regard to bilateral nuclear-arms negotiations and nuclear disarmament, the preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution (A/C.1/51/L.21) reflect the profound transition that has taken place in international relations and the resulting shifts in perceptions and attitudes towards nuclear disarmament. A refreshing change has been particularly evident in the number of agreements reached. We welcome these developments as constituting significant contributions to nuclear disarmament. The preambular paragraphs also commend some changes and adjustments in the deployment of nuclear weapons and the expressed determination of the two major Powers to seek deep and significant reductions.

While these developments provide much-needed impetus to disarmament efforts and will hopefully take future endeavours to a new level of confidence and open new possibilities, there are still vast nuclear arsenals.

Undeniably, the nuclear predicament is still with us. Hence, the non-aligned countries will continue to press for nuclear disarmament within the time-frame which is reflected in the operative paragraphs. All Member States have a duty and an obligation to ensure the success of arms-limitation negotiations and to encourage such endeavours. These are also reflected in the operative paragraphs. It is the firm conviction of the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that the General Assembly should provide the necessary impetus to these negotiations with the objective of achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It is in this spirit that we commend the adoption of the draft resolution now before us.

Fourthly, with regard to measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the international community has long upheld the importance and authority of that Protocol, as has been consistently expressed in numerous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. Hence, in operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution (A/C.1/51/L.41), the General Assembly renews its calls to all States to observe strictly the principles and objectives contained in the Protocol and also reaffirms the vital necessity of upholding its provisions.

Furthermore, while some States parties to the Convention have decided to withdraw their reservations, others have maintained them. Hence, operative paragraph 2 of the draft calls upon these States to withdraw such

reservations in order to render the convention universally effective and implementable. It is the hope of the non-aligned countries that Member States will extend their support to the draft resolution.

Fifthly, on a procedural matter, members of the Non-Aligned Movement have concurred to recommend to the General Assembly that the item entitled "Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security" be included in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session. This draft decision is contained in document A/C.1/51/L.22.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of Ireland to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.1/Rev.1).

Mr. MacFhionnbhairr (Ireland): I wish to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51./L.1/Rev. 1, entitled "Expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament", on behalf of the following Member States: Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Greece, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lithuania, Malaysia, Portugal, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Tunisia, which are applicants for membership of the Conference.

In 1978, the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament called for consideration to be given to the enlargement of the then Committee on Disarmament. It required a full 12 years of deliberations at the Conference on Disarmament before agreement was reached in 1993 to accept a proposal by the Special Coordinator for Membership of the Conference on Disarmament, which included a group of 23 States from among the then 35 applicants for membership of the Conference on Disarmament. It required a further three years to give effect to that decision, which resulted in the entry of those States to the Conference on Disarmament earlier this year.

Decision CD/1356, which adopted the report of the Special Coordinator on Membership, explicitly stated that the Decision was without prejudice to the consideration of other candidatures to date. Furthermore, Decision CD/1356 also stated that the Conference would review the situation regarding membership following the presentation of progress reports by its President at the end of each part of its annual session. The decision clearly envisaged that the enlargement of the Conference would be a dynamic process and would not come to a close with the admission of 23 new members. This Assembly, in its consensus resolution 50/72 C, has already urged the Conference to give further consideration to remaining applicant States not included in that selection of 23 States.

The Conference on Disarmament has now achieved the negotiation of two major multilateral treaties which have application, in terms both of duties and of responsibilities, for the entire international community: the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. These disarmament treaties are premised on their ultimate universality. As the number of States for which multilateral disarmament measures have concrete implications at the national level increases, so also does the desire and, indeed, the right of States to be directly involved become more pronounced.

The decision as to which States may or may not contribute to the process of multilateral disarmament negotiations cannot, in the view of the sponsors of this draft resolution, be the sole reserve of any particular set of countries acting without regard to this General Assembly. Indeed, given that the Conference on Disarmament operates by consensus, a more open approach to its membership is more easily sustainable than might be the case in respect of some other multilateral forums.

The multilateral disarmament negotiations pursued at the Conference on Disarmament are of such a nature that all States which have the capacity and commitment to participate with the necessary resources in its activities are entitled to have their applications considered positively and promptly so as to enable them to participate as members and to bring their respective national perspectives and security interests to bear at the negotiation table.

There was no agreement by the Conference at the 1996 session to appoint a special coordinator to deal with expansion. We regret that the membership of the Conference did not see fit to attach sufficient importance to the calls by the applicant States in whose names this draft resolution is submitted to assign an official to develop proposals in this regard at the Conference. It will simply not suffice to pursue the further expansion of the Conference with the same 16-year cycle which had characterized the response to the call of the first special session to achieve the enlargement just completed. We hope, however, that arising out of the continuing inter-sessional consultations of the President, a rapid decision on all the remaining applications by the Conference will occur in 1997.

We consider that the draft resolution that the sponsors have laid before this Committee does not prejudice the

manner in which the Conference on Disarmament might proceed in achieving a solution to the applications of the aforementioned States. However, the sponsors expect that, with the adoption of this draft resolution, the Conference would respond to the Assembly's call with a degree of urgency commensurate with the heightened interest with which an increasing number of States now focus on disarmament issues — with more direct concerns, more focused commitment and, increasingly, with direct national interests that, they insist, must be taken into consideration and reflected in any multilateral disarmament negotiation.

The cold war — reflected in the Conference on Disarmament as elsewhere in the multilateral bodies dealing with security issues — has now given way to a new environment accompanied by the fresh involvement of an ever-increasing number of States more directly concerned in the details of multilateral disarmament negotiations. The Conference on Disarmament plays a central role in the field of multilateral disarmament, and the sponsors of the draft resolution, some of which applied for membership as early as 1982, are determined to pursue with vigour the question of their access to Conference on Disarmament membership.

The sponsors recommend that this draft resolution, contained in document A/C.1/51/L.1/Rev.1, be adopted by the Committee by consensus.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Belarus to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.36.

Mr. Laptsenak (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): I should like to present, for consideration under agenda item 60, draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.36, entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference on Disarmament" on behalf of the following 36 Member States: Afghanistan, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

As the list of Member States makes abundantly clear, the sponsors include countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Eastern and Central Europe, Western Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Many members of the Non-Aligned Movement, the European Union and the CIS are included. As initiators of this draft resolution, the Republic of Belarus and the other sponsors believe that it is a unique example of preventive diplomacy, proposing ways and means of reacting to possible changes in circumstances in this area.

The draft resolution proposes the use of the Conference on Disarmament as a mechanism to be activated when circumstances require. It is non-confrontational in nature. The sponsors include countries representing various groups and regions. Nor does the draft resolution have any financial implications. It refers to previous General Assembly resolutions on the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons, and also takes note of paragraph 77 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly.

The draft resolution emphasizes the determination of Member States to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction that have characteristics comparable in destructive effect to those of weapons of mass destruction identified in the definition of weapons of mass destruction adopted by the United Nations in 1948. It notes that the item on new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons was considered in the Conference on Disarmament during its previous sessions. The draft resolution also notes the desirability of keeping the matter under review, as appropriate.

The operative part of the draft resolution reaffirms the need for effective measures to be taken in order to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction. It requests the Conference on Disarmament, without prejudice to further overview of its agenda, to keep the matter under review, as appropriate, with a view to making, when necessary, recommendations on undertaking specific negotiations on identified types of such weapons. It calls upon all States, immediately following any recommendation of the Conference on Disarmament, to give favourable consideration to those recommendations.

The draft resolution also requests the Conference on Disarmament to continue its practice of reporting the results of any consideration of the matter in its annual reports to the General Assembly. Finally, the draft resolution decides to include in the provisional agenda of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session an item entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new

types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference on Disarmament".

The sponsors of the draft resolution believe that, as was the case three years ago when the question was last considered by the General Assembly, the draft resolution should be adopted by consensus. We appeal to all countries concerned to sponsor it.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/51/L.6, A/C.1/51/L.30, A/C.1/51/L.31 and A/C.1/51/L.44.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have asked to speak in order to introduce four draft resolutions, and I hope that the Committee will bear with me as I do so. The Pakistani delegation has had the opportunity to speak during this session on the security environment and threat of conventional and nuclear weapon proliferation that exists in South Asia. Earlier during this session of the General Assembly, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, proposed the convening of a conference on peace and security in South Asia. Pakistan will continue to seek a comprehensive approach to resolving the interrelated problems in South Asia, including the resolution of disputes, conventional arms issues, and practical modalities and agreements to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in our region. The initiative for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia will remain a part of these endeavours by Pakistan.

I wish to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.6, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia", on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh and Pakistan. The proposal to make South Asia a nuclear-weapon-free zone was first made by Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1972. The Pokaran nuclear explosion two years later highlighted the dangers of the nuclear arms race in South Asia. We were therefore gratified when the General Assembly expressed its endorsement for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia in resolution 3265 B (XXIX) of 9 December 1974. Since then, this call has been affirmed by the General Assembly every year, and remains relevant today, given the serious security environment in South Asia.

The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament recognized the viability and necessity of the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones as an important element of the global endeavour to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Today, nuclear-weapon-free zones have been established in many parts of the world. Not only does Latin America have the Treaty of Tlatelolco, but two large neighbouring countries in Latin America have successfully instituted measures for mutually monitoring their nuclear capabilities.

The Treaty of Pelindaba has been signed, establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. Steps have been taken for the full implementation of the Rarotonga Treaty in the South Pacific. On 15 December 1995, 10 countries in South-East Asia decided to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in their region. Serious efforts are being made for further understandings that would, in effect, make the entire southern hemisphere a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

It is the conviction of the sponsors of this draft resolution that conditions exist in South Asia to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone. All the States of South Asia have made unilateral declarations pledging themselves not to acquire, develop or manufacture nuclear weapons. The objective of establishing a suitable and effective regime in South Asia that will preclude a nuclear arms race in the region is therefore realistic and desirable.

The draft resolution in document A/C.1/51/L.6 reaffirms the international community's enduring support for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia. Pakistan will welcome consultations and dialogue with all regional and extra-regional States to promote the objectives of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in our region. It is our hope that the draft resolution will be adopted with the overriding support that it has received in the past.

Turning to the second draft resolution, I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Colombia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sudan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Viet Nam, the draft resolution entitled, "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons" contained in document A/C.1/51/L.30. I should like to make a few remarks in explaining the rationale and substance of the draft resolution.

Since 1945, nuclear weapons have proliferated both horizontally — to five States — and vertically — to a mind-boggling number of over 60,000. These nuclear weapons threaten the security of all States and all peoples. They pose the threat of human extinction. Pakistan and many other non-nuclear-weapon States have consistently believed

that one precondition for halting the further horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons is the extension of credible and legally binding assurances by the nuclear-weapon States that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the non-nuclear-weapon States. We have repeatedly clarified that the limited and conditional assurances extended by four of the five nuclear Powers — first, in Security Council resolution 255 (1968); later in unilateral statements in 1978; and subsequently in Security Council resolution 984 (1995) — are inadequate to reassure the non-nuclear-weapon States about their security and do not fully discharge the obligations of the nuclear-weapon States.

Our reasons for seeking such unconditional and legally binding assurances are clear and, we believe, irrefutable. First, under Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter, the nuclear-weapon States, like other States, have an obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force. This restraint applies especially to nuclear weapons, because of the horrendous consequences of their use. Secondly, the alternatives to the absence of such assurances would be serious: the further horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, notwithstanding the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Thirdly, the elimination of nuclear weapons, even under time-frames envisaged in the proposal of the group of 28 non-aligned and neutral States, will take at least two to three decades. Until then, the non-nuclear-weapon States will continue to be vulnerable to the threat or use of nuclear weapons, except for those covered by the umbrella of nuclear alliances. Fourthly, the absence of such assurances erodes the moral foundations of the goal of nuclear non-proliferation.

Since 1978, the General Assembly has asked the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a legally binding international agreement to assure the non-nuclear-weapon States against the threat or use of nuclear weapons. Although an Ad Hoc Committee was established for this purpose, it failed to negotiate an agreed formula for legally binding negative security assurances.

During the cold war, the argument that some non-nuclear-weapon States were in alliance with a nuclear Power carried some weight, though not complete credibility. However, with the end of the cold war and the elimination of hostile military blocs, there is now no good reason why there should be any justification or limitation on the provision of negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

Unfortunately, last year before the Review and Extension Conference of the NPT, the nuclear Powers made statements on positive and negative security assurances that were incorporated into Security Council resolution 984 (1995). We have analysed the conditional and qualified nature of the assurances contained in the statements of four of the five nuclear-weapon States. Only China extended assurances that were unconditional and unqualified. I will not elaborate on our objections to these statements at this time. I should like to say that — for Pakistan, at least — limitations of the assurances only to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT or similar non-proliferation arrangements is unjustified. To say the least, we find it totally unacceptable that, notwithstanding the end of the cold war, the nuclear-weapon States continue to contemplate the threat or use of nuclear weapons even against non-nuclear-weapon States, and thus expose to a potential threat perhaps a larger number of non-nuclear-weapon States than was the case in the era of the East-West nuclear alliances.

The draft resolution in document A/C.1/51/L.30 endorses the objective of negotiating in the Conference on Disarmament an internationally binding convention to provide assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons proposed by 28 members of the Conference on Disarmament belonging to the Group of 21 also accords priority to this subject. The sponsors are satisfied that none of the nuclear-weapon States has ruled out the option of concluding a binding international instrument against the threat or use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. We therefore look forward to resuming negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on this issue in an Ad Hoc Committee early in 1997.

Pakistan hopes that the draft resolution will be adopted with the support of the largest possible majority of Member States.

I turn now to the third draft resolution. I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "General and Complete Disarmament: Regional disarmament", which is contained in document A/C.1/51/L.31, on behalf of the following other sponsors: Albania, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Mali, Nepal, New Zealand, Niger, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Sudan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.

The draft resolution in document A/C.1/51/L.31 reflects the broad international consensus that the regional approach offers the best prospect for achieving specific measures of disarmament. The causes of most wars and conflicts have historically been local and regional in nature. The cold-war confrontation between the two super-Powers and the age of weapons of mass destruction highlighted the imperative of adopting global measures for security and disarmament, especially for nuclear disarmament.

Major threats to international peace and security in the post-cold-war era largely emanate from the proliferation of regional disputes and conflicts, which have multiplied rapidly in recent years. These conflicts fuel the build-up of conventional weapons in many regions. The acquisition and use of increasingly lethal weapons heightens violence, destruction and suffering in such conflicts. Furthermore, regional imbalances in the size of armed forces heighten concerns about national security. Such concerns provide motivation for the development and acquisition of non-conventional means of self-defence.

The draft resolution seeks to build on the existing consensus regarding regional disarmament. This is especially reflected in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and in the guidelines and recommendations adopted by the Disarmament Commission in 1993.

The international community has recognized that global measures for arms control and disarmament must be complemented by steps taken at the regional level in order to address the indigenous dynamics which fuel tensions and lead to regional conflicts. Global and regional approaches are complementary and must be pursued simultaneously.

The draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.31 affirms these fundamental propositions concerning regional disarmament. It highlights the fact that international peace and security will be enhanced by regional disarmament measures through improvement of the security of States, especially smaller States, thus reducing the risk of regional conflicts.

In its operative part the draft resolution calls upon States to conclude agreements, wherever possible, for nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels. It welcomes the initiatives taken by some States for disarmament, non-proliferation and security at the regional and subregional levels, as well as the efforts aimed at promoting confidence-building measures.

Draft resolutions similar to this one have been adopted at previous sessions by a virtual consensus of the membership of the United Nations. We hope that the draft resolution will be adopted without any dissenting vote this year.

I come finally the fourth and last draft resolution. I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.44 on behalf of the sponsors listed in the document: Bangladesh, Benin, Mexico, Nepal, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Pakistan.

The draft resolution advocates a practical approach to promote the goal of conventional disarmament, that is through agreements at the regional and subregional levels. As is generally recognized, the motivations for the acquisition and build-up of conventional weapons are largely regional in nature. Imbalances in the levels of conventional armaments can also heighten tensions and create the possibility for the use or threat of use of force.

The draft resolution acknowledges that the preservation of a balance in defence capabilities at the lowest level of armaments would contribute to peace and stability. It expresses the belief that in promoting regional peace and security at the lowest level of armaments militarily significant States and States with larger military capabilities have a special responsibility. It also states that in regions of tension an important objective should be to prevent the possibility of a surprise military attack and to avoid aggression.

The draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.44 includes a new sixth preambular paragraph, which notes some of the initiatives for conventional disarmament at the regional and subregional level, especially the consultations commenced among a number of Latin American countries and the proposals for conventional arms control made in the context of South Asia.

The operative part of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.44 would reiterate the desire of the General Assembly to give urgent consideration to the issues involved in conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels and would once again request the Conference on Disarmament, as a first step, to consider the formulation of principles that could serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control.

The emphasis in the field of conventional weapons has thusfar remained almost exclusively on questions of

confidence-building and increasing transparency. Efforts have also been initiated to control transfers of conventional weapons by supplier-sponsored arrangements outside multilaterally negotiated legal frameworks.

We believe that the essential objective of all measures related to conventional weapons should be to promote the security of States at the lowest possible level of armaments. The approach proposed in the draft resolution can help to harmonize the existing positions of States on the ways and means to address the question of conventional weapons in order to promote global and regional security and disarmament. A framework of principles in conventional arms control and disarmament based on the experience of the past, the realities of the present and the potential of the future would facilitate the formulation of consensus on conventional disarmament at the regional and subregional levels.

The Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, is the most appropriate forum for evolving principles in conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels. The structure of the Conference, its membership and the available expertise will ensure in-depth negotiations which can lead to agreement on a meaningful framework of principles for conventional disarmament at the regional and subregional levels.

We hope that the draft resolution will attract wide support in this Committee and in the General Assembly and will enable the Conference on Disarmament to commence work on this issue at an early date.

Mr. Salmi (Finland): Finland supports the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.46, which was introduced by the Permanent Representative of the United States earlier. We hope that this draft resolution and the action by the General Assembly will guide the work towards a solution that will truly address the urgent problem of landmines. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Ms. Tarja Halonen, announced in her statement to the General Assembly on 27 September 1996, Finland is committed to working towards the achievement at the earliest possible date of an effective international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines worldwide. This is a shared objective of the Member States of the European Union, in accordance with the joint action adopted on 1 October of this year.

Our commitment is clear. Let me quote two key messages of the above-mentioned statement made by Finland:

> "To be effective, such a solution must be legally binding, global and verifiable. *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 12th meeting)*

> "Finland will work actively for the inclusion of a ban on anti-personnel landmines in the negotiating agenda of the Conference on Disarmament when the Conference reconvenes in January." *(ibid.)*

This is what we will strive for.

The focus of the discussion of landmines should be on measures that truly affect the problem. We should not lose sight of this.

Why do we want a global ban? The problem of landmines is a sad reality in conflict areas across the globe. The very nature of the problem calls for a global approach. Solutions can be achieved only through broad international cooperation. Those who are needed for solving the problem, those who are directly involved in the problem — including the key countries producing and exporting anti-personnel landmines — must be involved in the process.

It is self-evident that a ban would not include universal participation, at least not at the beginning. None of the arms — control treaties are fully universal, though this is and should remain our shared objective. However, the ban should achieve wide global coverage. A "quick-fix" endorsing the unilateral bans established by some States would result in a treaty with only a limited number of parties and with limited global participation that would not enjoy the global credibility upon which one could build a universal norm.

Why do we want a legally binding instrument? Political declarations are not effective in those places where the landmine crisis continues to kill and maim innocent people. Political declarations do not respond to the humanitarian need, which should be our main concern. We believe that a legally binding instrument is the only effective way to stop the scourge, and it is achievable.

Why do we want a verifiable treaty? A treaty totally banning anti-personnel landmines is also about security. This is a fact, not an opinion. A credible total ban can be achieved only if the security aspects related to the ban are

addressed. Adequate verification provisions are essential to ensure that the total prohibition of anti-personnel landmines is fully complied with. As is often said: trust, but verify. Verification will be difficult, as it is difficult with any arms-control treaty; but, through an effective deterrence against possible non-compliance, a meaningful global norm will be born.

What is the right forum for negotiating an anti-personnel landmine ban? We believe that a ban on anti-personnel landmines based on the objective of a global, legally-binding and verifiable anti-personnel landmine treaty should be negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament. This would encompass those countries that are needed. I would like to underline that the Conference on Disarmament forum would incorporate in the process not only the 61 current member States of the Conference. Those countries participating in the work of the Conference could also fully join such negotiations, as was the case with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

We have the following comments for those who have reservations about the Conference on Disarmament as the most appropriate international forum to negotiate an anti-personnel-landmine ban.

First, the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. That it is such has been agreed upon by consensus ever since the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament continues to have a crucial role to play in the current international situation. The anti-personnel-landmine ban, as an important global disarmament issue, should be negotiated at the single-most important global disarmament negotiating forum.

Secondly, the Conference on Disarmament is an established forum which is now available for new negotiations following the conclusion of the CTBT, provided that the political will is there. The only other credible alternative is the Chemical Weapons Convention process, but it may not have another review conference until 2001. We believe that work at the Conference on Disarmament could start faster and that the negotiations could be more intensive.

Thirdly, the Conference on Disarmament would not be unaffected by the political momentum that, largely thanks to the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations, is pushing the process towards a total ban. On the contrary, if the process could be started within the Conference on Disarmament, the momentum would increase and, we believe, expand into countries that are not yet committed to the goal of a total ban. Accusations that support the Conference on Disarmament as the negotiating forum would be a delaying tactic are totally unfounded. The momentum is there and it will remain.

Fourthly, to take the issue to the Conference on Disarmament would not put aside the humanitarian dimension of the landmine question, but it would incorporate the security aspects that, we believe, must be a part of the process in order to achieve a global ban.

Fifthly, it is clear that the Conference on Disarmament route would bring into the process countries that are not able to commit themselves here and now to an anti-personnel landmine ban. This would be a more painful road to follow compared with a "quick fix", but through such a process the commitment of most — if not all — participating in the negotiations would grow. This is necessary to achieve a global ban.

Sixthly, if a process could be started within the Conference on Disarmament, we believe that a treaty would be achievable within a couple of years. The question is: Can the Conference on Disarmament agree on initiating such negotiations? A serious effort to this end should be made immediately when the Conference on Disarmament starts its next session in January.

Finland will begin this effort in the Conference on Disarmament. Our goal is to have an ad hoc committee established with a negotiating mandate at the earliest possible date. If that is not immediately possible in January, the other possibility, although less satisfying, is the nomination of a special coordinator charged with the task of urgently reaching the agreement necessary to start actual negotiations.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): Canada, as a deeply committed sponsor, welcomes the introduction of the draft resolution before the Assembly, entitled "An international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines". We should like to thank the United States for its persevering work on a subject that is of such great importance to people worldwide, and particularly for those who have to suffer the consequences of such mines.

Canada has supported the intent and substance of this draft resolution from the very outset.

As we see it, this draft resolution represents a historic turning point in the efforts of the international community to find a permanent solution to the global crisis in anti-personnel landmines. This draft resolution forces us to recognize the fact that a total ban on the production, stockpiling, transfer and use of anti-personnel landmines the only way of halting the blind killing and casualties caused by anti-personnel landmines.

(spoke in English)

We believe that this text is ground-breaking in other respects as well. While paving the way for concerted multilateral action, it also calls upon States to take immediate and unilateral steps to halt the international trade and use of anti-personnel mines.

Equally important, the sponsorship of this draft resolution demonstrates that support for a ban on anti-personnel landmines now exists across a broad cross-section of the international community. This is an issue on which North and South are working together on a common agenda.

In Canada's view, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons establishes a clear precedent for the treatment of anti-personnel landmines as a humanitarian issue. It is this humanitarian aspect of anti-personnel landmines which makes the issue so compelling and the need for action so urgent. We believe that the world needs to place anti-personnel mines in the historical dustbin, along with dumdum bullets, poison gas and, more recently, blinding lasers. We also believe that States must continue to put in place unilateral restrictions until we are able to develop a new international legal instrument.

This draft resolution acknowledges that we are speaking of a humanitarian crisis. It consequently calls upon States to weigh carefully the military utility of anti-personnel landmines against the horrific humanitarian costs associated with their continued use around the world: the destruction of human lives and communities an arm, an eye and a leg at a time.

Canada has already taken action through our comprehensive moratorium on the production, use and export of anti-personnel landmines. We have begun the unilateral destruction of our stockpiles of anti-personnel mines and expect to complete shortly the initial phase of this process, that is, the destruction of two-thirds of our stockpiles.

Canada has also encouraged others to take action on both a unilateral and collective basis. At a meeting in Ottawa in early October, we were host to a large number of Governments and international governmental and non-governmental organizations to develop a strategy for achieving a global ban on anti-personnel landmines. Fifty States adopted the "Declaration of the Ottawa Conference", in which they committed themselves to ensure, *inter alia*,

> "the earliest possible conclusion of a legally binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel mines".

At the conclusion of the Ottawa meeting, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lloyd Axworthy, invited all States to work with Canada in developing a treaty banning anti-personnel landmines. Mr. Axworthy also announced that Canada was prepared to host a conference in December 1997, at which such a treaty could be signed.

Canada strongly supports this draft resolution. It brings clearly within view the end of the global landmines crisis. It demonstrates that the political will to ban anti-personnel mines now exists. It shows that a broad-based, critical mass of States is now prepared to take a substantial step forward to ban anti-personnel landmines in the interest of humanity and it captures the momentum and urgency which propel this issue. Canada is confident that the political will does exist to achieve a ban on anti-personnel landmines. We urge the entire community of nations to support this draft resolution.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour of introducing to the First Committee the draft resolution entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", which is contained in document A/C.1/51/L.33, on behalf of the following sponsors: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Libya, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Turkey, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia and the United Kingdom.

The increased number of sponsors of this draft resolution as compared to that of last year — which for the first time had the support of all the countries of the European Union — clearly illustrates the spirit guiding the countries of the Mediterranean region and of the European Union towards turning this region into a zone of peace,

security and cooperation, thus making the Mediterranean true to its vocation as a lake of peace.

The draft resolution submitted to the Committee by its sponsors is very similar to the one adopted last year, as the sponsors have once again this year focused on a multi-dimensional approach to security and cooperation in the Mediterranean area.

The draft resolution before this Committee reiterates the basic principles contained in paragraphs 1 and 2 and recognizes the need to eliminate economic and social disparities among countries of the Mediterranean area. The countries of the Mediterranean consider the full observance of these principles as indispensable to strengthened Mediterranean relations.

It is in this light that countries on either shore have undertaken many initiatives, the most recent and significant being that which took place in Barcelona in November of last year. The new paragraphs 4 and 6 therefore seek to encourage such efforts on the part of Mediterranean countries seeking to determine jointly the terms of their relations in meeting common challenges through appropriate means, based on a spirit of partnership aimed at turning the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchange and cooperation, guaranteeing peace, security, stability and prosperity to the benefit of all riparian States without exception.

Through this draft resolution, the sponsors also seek to renew their commitment, in the face of the new challenges facing the countries of the Mediterranean region, to combat terrorism — in respect of which paragraph 10 of the draft resolution has been strengthened with the aim of bringing it into accordance with existing United Nations texts — international crime, drug trafficking and illicit arms transfers.

The sponsors also reiterate their determination to oppose and fight any obstacle to the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and seek to lay the foundation for democracy and pluralistic society.

As in previous years, the sponsors are confident of the unanimous support that members of the Committee will lend to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.33 by adopting it without a vote.

Mrs. Bourgois (France) (*interpretation from French*): A draft resolution on a ban on anti-personnel landmines has just been introduced to the First Committee. My delegation welcomes the introduction of this text by the delegation of the United States of America, testimony to that country's commitment, to this major undertaking. France has also long worked to promote this cause. France was one of the first countries to propose to the international community a complete and general ban on anti-personnel landmines.

The President of the Republic of France, Mr. Jacques Chirac, has himself followed with great attention the progress being made in this area. I should like to recall the initiatives taken by my country, starting with its consideration in 1993 of the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the revision of its Protocol II. On 2 October 1996, France forswore the use of anti-personnel landmines, thereby becoming the first permanent member of the Security Council to follow such a rigorous doctrine. That action is an essential part of the joint action of the European Union that was adopted by the 15 member countries on 1 October 1996.

The choice of such a doctrine on the non-use of landmines is particularly significant given the international responsibilities incumbent upon France and the commitment of its armies throughout the world to peace. This doctrine allows no geographical exception whatever and applies to all categories of anti-personnel landmine. It will be in force for an indefinite period and no departure from it will be allowed except in circumstances of absolute necessity to protect our forces, upon the decision of governmental authorities and in strict accordance with international conventions in force. Furthermore, I should like to recall the fact that my country has already decided to renounce the manufacture and export of anti-personnel landmines. France will continue to reduce its stocks of anti-personnel landmines through the destruction process that was started in 1996.

France supports the draft resolution before us and would only wish it to go further. It is important for the United Nations to agree on the principle of banning anti-personnel landmines. It would be even more important on this occasion for the international community to identify guidelines to establish the ways and means of achieving a legally binding and verifiable international agreement.

We feel that the scope of the humanitarian tragedy that is caused by these weapons demands a bold, realistic and effective approach. That is why, like the delegation of Finland, we believe that the appropriate context in which to deal with the total elimination of anti-personnel landmines is in the Conference on Disarmament. As the General Assembly recalled in its resolution 50/72 A of

12 December 1995, the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. The Conference on Disarmament is the framework most appropriate to the scope of the question under consideration. It was there that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty were negotiated. The Conference on Disarmament is also a means of guaranteeing realism, because it allows the diversity of views to be taken into account.

Finally, we believe that there are two main criteria that make the Conference on Disarmament the most effective body for such negotiations. First, only an agreement negotiated in Geneva can enjoy the universality that is indispensable for achieving true progress towards the total elimination of anti-personnel landmines. Secondly, using the Conference on Disarmament would allow a phased approach that would make it possible to achieve rapid initial results. We would not, of course, preclude the possibility of additional steps being taken. We are particularly anxious to contribute to initiatives such as the Ottawa conference and to be fully represented in all regional action, especially the joint action of the European Union, that keeps events moving.

The draft resolution before us does not identify the negotiating body on a convention banning these weapons. It is therefore on the basis of our discussions, therefore, that France, which will vote in favour of the draft resolution, must decide whether it intends to become a sponsor of the text.

Mr. Rider (New Zealand): I should like to offer some comments on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.46, introduced earlier by the Permanent Representative of the United States. The initiative of the United States in taking a lead on this issue complements that displayed by Canada in convening the recent Ottawa meeting, which New Zealand was very pleased to attend. Discussions at that meeting and the agreements reached have paved the way for the steps that we are taking in this Committee.

As a sponsor, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to place on record its strong support for the draft resolution entitled "An international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines". We should particularly like to welcome the call in paragraph 1 for negotiations on a legally binding instrument to ban such mines. We see this as a significant step forward from similar resolutions adopted in previous years. It is a measure of the growing international consensus on the vital importance of securing an international ban on anti-personnel landmines.

The thrust of this draft resolution is very much in line with developments in New Zealand this year. In April, my Government declared a unilateral moratorium on the use of anti-personnel landmines by the New Zealand Defence Force. At the same time, the Government also decided not to permit the export of any anti-personnel landmines. We are pleased that many countries have recently taken similar decisions and would urge other States to do the same, as called for in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution before us.

It is important that, while we debate these issues, we keep in mind the horrendous suffering caused on a daily basis by anti-personnel landmines. My country's support for such a ban is reinforced by our experience in mine-infested countries. The participation of Defence Force personnel in demining efforts around the world and here at United Nations Headquarters has convinced us that only a total ban will prevent the creation of further misery through the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines.

The draft resolution that Ambassador Albright introduced should provide an excellent basis for the development of an international consensus on how best to negotiate a global ban. There are several options under consideration, some of which have been touched on today by previous speakers. In our view, each has advantages and disadvantages. My Government believes that a key factor is the need to ensure that negotiations get under way promptly and that they proceed on an inclusive basis. To be fully effective, the ban we are looking to negotiate should command the support of as many countries as possible. In that respect, the number and range of sponsors of the current draft, and the wide support that we are confident it will command in this Committee, underline the truly global nature of our enterprise to ban these weapons.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Germany to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.38.

Mr. Hoffman (Germany): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.38, entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures", on behalf of the following initial sponsors: Angola, Australia, Austria, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Congo, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Lithuania, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mozambique, the Netherlands,

Nicaragua, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Uruguay.

Before outlining some general features of this project, let me start with a preliminary remark. This project aims to meet the concerns of many Member States, from North and South. It was jointly developed with a geographically well-balanced group of countries whose interest in the matter was crucial to the project from an early stage. This approach finds itself well reflected in the list of initial sponsors, which represent all parts of the globe.

The draft resolution endeavours to give additional momentum to the concept of consolidating peace in areas that have suffered from conflict by focusing in particular on some arms-related implications of this task. Control of small arms and light weapons is one aspect, but the issue is larger. It may also include, for example, confidence-building measures, the demobilization of combatants and their reintegration into civilian life. The intention in this draft is not to focus on any of these aspects in particular, but to underline the relevance of their entire range in an integrated approach for the consolidation of peace and the rehabilitation of areas that have suffered from conflict. We believe that a beginning could and should be made in this direction by requesting the Secretary-General to make recommendations and develop guidelines against the background of experience gained, based on the views and implemented with the help of Member States.

The second preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 1, 3, 4 and 5 can be regarded as the core elements of the draft resolution. By choosing the term "practical disarmament measures", we want to underline the fact that in this area tangible results can be achieved relatively easily on the ground, provided that the will exists.

The first preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 1 describe the range of questions that we have in mind. But by no means do we want to suggest that practical measures may apply only to these areas. Other areas of disarmament are simply not covered by the scope of this draft. In response to suggestions, we have added the word "certain" before "practical disarmament measures", both in the second preambular paragraph and in operative paragraph 1, in order to avoid any misunderstanding.

In paragraphs 5 and 6, we also call on regional arrangements and agencies, as well as other organs, to assist in this task. In this context, we offer a special invitation to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, which has already worked in a similar field. The fourth to tenth preambular paragraphs refer to initiatives in related fields, without focusing on any of them in particular.

This draft resolution has no financial implications. The Secretariat will produce the report within existing resources. To make that quite clear, it has been agreed that the Secretariat will make an additional statement to that effect.

This draft resolution has always been aimed at consensus. The initial drafting, as well as additional adjustments after consultations with Member States, were made in this spirit and we are open to further changes if they are deemed necessary.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): The sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.29 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Central Asian region have been conducting consultations with prospective co-sponsors and other interested delegations. As a result, the sponsors have been given to understand that further time is needed for some States to examine the possible implications of creating such a zone and to seek further clarification of some of the provisions of the draft resolution.

Bearing this situation in mind, the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.29 will not insist on considering or taking a decision on this draft at this session. The sponsors would like to take this opportunity to thank the delegations that have expressed their support for the draft resolution or had expressed readiness to sponsor it if it were put forward for adoption.

My delegation would like to announce that it will become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.46 on an international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of India to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.19.Rev.1.

Ms. Ghose (India): I have the honour today to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/51/L.19/Rev.1, on a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran, the Lao People's Democratic

Republic, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Sudan, Viet Nam and India.

India and several other countries, including non-nuclear developing countries of the group of non-aligned and other developing countries, have for some years been proposing and underlining through a call for a legally binding prohibition on the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, the need for a convention on this issue. We have always been encouraged by the fact that a majority of Member States support this proposal. However, we deeply regret the fact that no action has been taken so far to implement resolution 50/71 E, mainly due, we are aware, to the negative approach of most of the nuclear-weapon States and the States under their nuclear protection.

This year, the proposal has particular relevance in view of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice in response to the General Assembly's query on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. While we view the Court's advisory opinion as a unified whole, there are two important aspects that I would like to highlight in introducing this draft resolution. First, the advisory opinion has made international humanitarian law applicable to the use of nuclear weapons. As we are all aware, international humanitarian law is applicable in all circumstances. Therefore there already exists in international humanitarian law a general prohibition on the use of these weapons of mass destruction.

Secondly, it has become evident from the statements of the judges of the International Court that a legally binding instrument specifically prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is both pertinent and necessary in order as it were to underwrite the existing provisions of international humanitarian law. This would remove any ambiguities, should they exist, which could be used to justify the use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States and therefore, we hope, would be a genuine and significant step forward towards the elimination of nuclear weapons and towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

There are two other draft resolutions into which this draft resolution dovetails, both of which propose the negotiation of a nuclear-weapons convention which would, we expect, eventually subsume this proposed convention. The draft resolution that we are proposing today on behalf of the 24 sponsors is intended to ensure that the prohibition against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is codified in an international disarmament agreement — perhaps the first real nuclear disarmament agreement.

The text of the draft resolution this year refers specifically to the opinion of the International Court of Justice that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict — that is, the principles and provisions of humanitarian law. We have also incorporated the unanimous opinion delivered by the Court that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

We have also added a new preambular paragraph to both the draft resolution and the draft convention that is annexed to it, to underline the need for such a specific and express prohibition. We look forward to the widest possible support for the draft resolution this year, particularly in view of the importance of the issue at this point in time.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Mexico to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.8.

Mr. de Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is an honour for the delegation of Mexico to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.8 on the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme, on behalf of the following sponsors: Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Pakistan and Mexico.

The second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1982, had two concrete results. The first was the solemn reaffirmation of the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament, which was held in 1978; and the second was the launching, at the initiative of Mexico, of the World Disarmament Campaign. That campaign, known from 1992 as the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme, was not intended to be merely an instrument for the dissemination of the work of the Organization in the field of disarmament. Without overlooking that aspect of its work, which is without doubt very important, the Programme allows for the full participation, in all multilateral negotiations and debates on the subject, of those States that are not militarily important.

Training activities, including the fellowship programme for young diplomats, and the organization of round tables on the most important items on the international disarmament agenda, have gradually made it possible to raise the level of the participation of delegations of developing countries in the Conference on Disarmament,

in the Disarmament Commission and in the General Assembly — to refer only to the most relevant forums.

These activities, however, have been sorely tried and tested by budgetary restrictions and by the constant decrease in the contributions of Member States to the Voluntary Trust Fund. Even more serious is the fact that publications that are so necessary for the daily work of delegations, such as the *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook* and the compilation of multilateral instruments on the subject, are endangered, even when they are published in just one language, as has been the case in recent years.

My delegation has noted with deep concern the statement in the Secretary-General's report in document A/51/219 that, with regard to the future Programme

> "fewer activities are contemplated ... owing to the serious financial constraints under which it will have to operate." (*A/51/219, para. 4*)

To that we would add the fact that voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the Programme have been constantly decreasing for several years. As a result, forward planning is impossible. The Government of Mexico is convinced of the need to maintain and strengthen the Programme, and, as it has been doing over the past 14 years, will be continuing to make its contribution to the Trust Fund.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.8, which we are introducing today, reflects the concern of the sponsors at the prevailing situation. The fifth preambular paragraph stresses the continuing decrease of contributions to the Programme, which has already affected a number of activities.

In its operative section, the new paragraph 1 takes notes with concern of the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/219). Paragraph 3 stresses the importance of the Programme as an instrument in enabling developing countries to participate fully in multilateral deliberations and negotiations on disarmament. Paragraph 5 explicitly refers to publications that the sponsors think should not be suspended for any reason.

Finally, I would like to point out that one paragraph from previous texts has been omitted: the paragraph that refers to the traditional pledging conference, as current financial restrictions have even prevented the convening of such conferences, which are only relatively successful when they do take place.

The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.8 trust that, this initiative will be adopted by consensus, as in previous years.

My delegation now has the honour to introduce a second draft resolution (A/C.1/51/L.9), on agenda item 78, entitled "Consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco)". We are introducing the draft resolution on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela and my own country, Mexico.

Here we have the support of all the States parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which marks an increase over the number of sponsors at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. This shows the high priority that the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean attach to consolidating the regime that began almost 30 years ago.

Since the Committee adopted the draft resolution on this item last year, the following events have taken place: the Government of Cuba has signed the amendments to the Treaty, the Government of Guyana has acceded to the Treaty and the Government of Paraguay has ratified the amendments. Thus, the Treaty is now fully in force for 31 of the 33 sovereign States of the region, which virtually concludes the process that began three decades ago.

I would like to place particular emphasis on the mechanism for exemptions contained in article 28 of the Treaty of Tlatelolco which provided for the gradual establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America and the Caribbean, without waiting for all States of the region to deposit their respective instruments of ratification as provided for in article 26 of the Treaty. The originality of this mechanism can serve as an example for other regions to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones and allows for the gradual achievement of the objective of a treaty without detriment to the individual concerns of any given State of the region in question.

We welcome any initiative for the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements freely entered into among the States of the region concerned since we see them as an important measure in

the field of disarmament in terms of achieving the ultimate objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.9 contains two new preambular paragraphs. The fifth preambular paragraph takes note of the thirtieth anniversary on 14 February 1997 of the opening for signature of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and the ninth recalls that the Council of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted a resolution calling for the promotion of cooperation and consultations with other nuclear-weapon-free zones. The draft resolution also takes note of Guyana's full adherence to the Treaty and the fact that the Treaty is now fully in force for nine countries of the region, including my own.

In its operative part, the text welcomes the concrete steps taken by some countries of the region for the consolidation of the regime of military denuclearization established by the Treaty, notes with satisfaction the full adherence of Guyana and urges the countries of the region that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification of the amendments to the Treaty approved by the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) in 1990, 1991 and 1992.

Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.9, which is supported by all States signatories of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, should once again enjoy the broadest support of the First Committee and we hope that this draft resolution will be adopted without a vote, as in previous years.

Mr. Mernier (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): Draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.46, on anti-personnel landmines, is of primary importance for my country. I will not go back over the enormity of the humanitarian catastrophe caused by anti-personnel landmines — we all know the full horror of the figures. After the qualified but real success of the amendment of Protocol II of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects, we should look at the problem of landmines again and try and find a definitive solution. The only answer is a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. The ban should cover the manufacture and particularly the use of these devices. Logically, it should also lead to the destruction of stockpiles within a reasonable period of time, in the not too distant future. This ambitious goal has been achieved by my country at the national level. Our current legislation bans anti-personnel landmines. This ban is a radical measure and provides for no exceptions or escape clauses. The destruction of army stockpiles has begun and should shortly be concluded.

For Belgium, it is now a question of ensuring that the international community adopts the same policy, the only policy that can cope with the global dimensions of the problem. In this connection, we welcome the initiative taken by Canada. The recent International Strategy Conference in Ottawa has launched a process that will have just the results we are looking for. In this context, Belgium will hold a follow-up conference in June next year and we will try to make sure it is the last such conference needed. We send an urgent invitation to all States that share our ambition to rid the world of anti-personnel landmines to come to Brussels to lay the foundations of a treaty without concessions, with no prevarication, to achieve the goal we have set ourselves.

We are convinced of the relevance of the Ottawa process and the need to keep up momentum during the Brussels conference. We regret but must recognize that not all States are ready to ban anti-personnel landmines. It seems to us, however, that this is one more reason to waste no time in establishing an international legal standard with those who are ready to do so which can act as a point of reference and maybe even a moral objective for the community of States.

We sincerely believe that such a treaty will inevitably have a spin-off effect which will bring us closer to the universality of a total and complete ban on these weapons. We are aware that universality cannot be achieved overnight, but at the same time we believe that, even though, prior to the amendment of Protocol II at the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons there were only 50 States parties, no one can deny the importance of the role the Convention has played in recent years.

For Belgium, it is very important to relaunch the process of achieving a total ban, as was recently discussed at Ottawa and which will shortly be continued in Brussels.

I wish to conclude by saying a few words about the role of the Conference on Disarmament. Clearly the kind of treaty we have in mind can be negotiated within that body and we are not precluding the idea that one day it may play an important role in this area. We believe nevertheless that, for the time being, it is very unlikely that a treaty banning anti-personnel landmines could be dealt with in the Conference on Disarmament. The urgency of

the problem dictates that we try to do what we can in a different forum. This is the purpose of the Ottawa Conference and the Brussels meeting. We are pleased to note that reference to these two important conferences appears in draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.46, which we are pleased to join in sponsoring.

Mr. Bakhiet (Sudan) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: My delegation associates itself with all the other delegations that have supported draft resolution A/C.1/51/L.46, which was introduced by the United States, on an international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines.

In the general debate in this Committee, my delegation reaffirmed its support for all international efforts to ban anti-personnel landmines, as we are all too familiar with the dangers they pose. In this respect, we would stress that Sudan has suffered the effects of more than a million mines being laid in its territory during wars. These pose a threat to peace and stability in the region.

Sudan appeals to the international community to shoulder its responsibilities in dealing with the question of landmines and associates itself with the efforts of the international community to disseminate information and provide technical assistance to put an end to this scourge.

The Chairman: Eighteen draft resolutions were introduced at this meeting, making a total of some 50 draft resolutions.

I shall call now on those delegations wishing to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Amar (Morocco) *(interpretation from French)*: Mr. Chairman, I first extend to you the sincere congratulations of the Moroccan delegation and assure you of the support and full cooperation of my delegation.

In his statement during the 12th meeting, held on 24 October 1996, the representative of Zambia asserted that Western Sahara was still under foreign domination. Let me provide some information which may help to enlighten him on the actual situation with respect to the so-called matter of the Sahara. In October 1975, at the request of Morocco, the International Court of Justice acknowledged in its advisory opinion that this territory which had been occupied by Spain was, at the time when it was colonized, not *terra nullius* and: "... that a legal tie of allegiance had existed" *(International Court of Justice, Advisory Opinion of 16 October 1975 on Western Sahara, para. 107)* between the Sahara and the Kingdom of Morocco. This allegiance was the form in which sovereignty was and is enshrined in international law existing before the creation of the nation State, in Muslim law and, more specifically, Moroccan public law.

On 14 November 1975, Sahara was ceded back to Morocco by the Madrid Accord that was signed between Morocco, Spain and Mauritania, thus putting an end to the Spanish presence in the territory. This Accord was officially deposited with the United Nations and noted by the General Assembly. Despite the problems and difficulties inherited from the colonial period and the policy of carving up its territory, Morocco has always worked peacefully to recover its territorial integrity stage by stage.

As far as Sahara is concerned, despite the Madrid Accord, and despite its historically and legally legitimate presence in that territory, Morocco, being a country which is committed to the principles of international law and which constantly works to preserve peace and stability in its region throughout the world, has proven its desire to resolve this problem peacefully once and for all. In this context, Morocco gave its complete and unreserved support to the efforts of the Secretary-General to organize a just and equitable referendum in the Sahara. Thus, Morocco has been actively involved in all the stages of the referendum process laid down in the Settlement Plan which was accepted by both parties in 1988 and which was endorsed by the Security Council.

Morocco has constantly reiterated in the most solemn way its commitment to the United Nations Settlement Plan and to pursuing the referendum process. Its efforts in this direction have, furthermore, been widely recognized and confirmed by the acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) *(interpretation from French)*: Once again, instead of using the most appropriate forum, the delegation of Morocco is using the Committee and thus confusing matters. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) recently adopted a consensus resolution sponsored by 58 countries calling for continued negotiations between the two parties. A Settlement Plan now exists, while there is a stalemate in the Security Council recognized by everyone.

The First Committee is not the most appropriate forum for taking up this issue. Western Sahara is a question of decolonization, regardless of what the representative of the Kingdom of Morocco says. I would therefore urge that the most appropriate forums be used — the Fourth Committee

and the Security Council — to provide any further clarification or explanations.

The Chairman: As members will recall, on 29 October the Committee informally agreed to extend the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions by 48 hours. I should like formally to request a decision on this agreement. May I take it that the Committee decides to extend the deadline?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.